



STATE OF MICHIGAN
TERRI LYNN LAND, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

DATE: October 9, 2006
TO: Political Party Committees
FROM: Michigan Department of State, Bureau of Elections
SUBJECT: FILING DEADLINES FOR NOVEMBER 7, 2006 GENERAL ELECTION

Carefully read this memo to determine if the described filings are required of your committee.

The reports are required of Political Party Committees that participate in the November 7, 2006 General Election.

Each Political Party Committee registered on the state level that 1) received or expended \$20,000.00 or more in 2006 or 2) expects to receive or expend \$20,000.00 or more in 2006 is required to file electronically. Committees may apply for MERTS Plus software on line at the MERTS Plus web site: www.mertsplus.com.

Campaign Statement Filing Deadlines

- I. The Pre-General Campaign Statement**, due October 27, 2006, covers the committee's financial activity through October 22, 2006.

Your committee must file the Pre-General Campaign Statement if by October 22 the committee participates in the election by 1) making an expenditure to support or oppose a candidate whose name appears on the ballot or is a write-in candidate in the election 2) making an expenditure to support or oppose a ballot question on the ballot or 3) making an expenditure for a get-out-the-vote activity related to the election.

- II. The Post-General Campaign Statement**, due December 7, 2006, covers the committee's financial activity through November 27, 2006.

Your committee must file the Post-General Campaign Statement if between October 23 and November 27 the committee participates in the election by 1) making an expenditure to support or oppose a candidate whose name appears on the ballot or is a write-in candidate in the election 2) making an expenditure to support or oppose a ballot question on the ballot or 3) making an expenditure for a get-out-the-vote activity related to the election.

Campaign Statement Coverage Dates

A Campaign Statement's opening date is the day after the closing date of the last Campaign Statement filed by the committee. If the committee has never filed Campaign Statements, the opening date of the first Campaign Statement filed is the earlier of the following two dates: 1) the committee's formation date or 2) the date the committee accepted its first contribution or made its first expenditure.

Campaign Statement Forms

Campaign Statement forms (including Late Contribution Reports) and instructions are available on the Department of State's website <www.michigan.gov/sos>.

Timely, Accurate Campaign Statements Required!

- If the committee raised **\$10,000.00 or less** during the previous two years, a \$25.00 late filing fee will be assessed each business day the Statement remains unfiled up to \$500.00.
- If the committee raised **more than \$10,000.00** during the previous two years, the maximum late filing fee, which can be assessed, is increased to \$1,000.00. The fee is assessed as follows:
 - (a) \$25.00 for each business day the Statement remains unfiled.
 - (b) An additional \$25.00 for each business day after the first three business days the Statement remains unfiled.
 - (c) An additional \$50.00 for each business day after the first 10 business days the Statement remains unfiled.
- Campaign Statements that are hand delivered, sent by first class mail or submitted electronically via the Internet must reach this office before 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Committees must be sure to allow ample mailing time if sending a filing by first class mail.
- A Pre-General Campaign Statement that is mailed by registered mail, certified mail or an overnight delivery service and postmarked two or more calendar days before the filing deadline will be viewed as a timely filing regardless of when it arrives.
- A Post-General Campaign Statement that is mailed by registered mail, certified mail or an overnight delivery service and postmarked on or before the filing deadline will be viewed as a timely filing regardless of when it arrives.
- Be sure to fill out all forms as accurately as possible. Notices will be sent to the committee if forms are omitted, figures are wrong, addresses are incorrect, etc. The committee is then required to file an amendment to correct the error(s).
- A Campaign Statement will not be accepted if it is illegible, does not bear a proper signature, is not the proper size, or is presented in a computer format that has not been approved by the Department of State's Bureau of Elections.

- Political Party Committees must file one original copy of each required Campaign Statement.

Late Contribution Reports

A Political Party Committee that participates in the November 7 general election is required to file a Late Contribution Report if the committee receives a contribution of \$200.00 or more from October 23, 2006 through November 4, 2006.

- A Late Contribution Report must be received by this office within 48 hours after the committee's receipt of the contribution. A Late Contribution Report must contain the date and amount of the contribution along with the contributor's name, street address, occupation, employer and principal place of business. The report may be made in a telegram, e-mail or fax or by any other means of written communication unless required to be filed electronically. The fax number for the Bureau of Elections is (517) 241-4785. A Late Contribution Report does not have to contain an original signature. In addition to this report, a late contribution must be disclosed on the next Campaign Statement filed by the committee.
- Committees that are required to file electronically must file any required Late Contribution Reports electronically. See below for further information.
- A Reporting Waiver does not waive late contribution reports. However, committees with a Reporting Waiver are not required to show late contributions on a subsequent Campaign Statement.
- A late filing fee will be assessed each business day a required Late Contribution Report is late up to \$2,000.00. The late filing fee will be assessed as follows:
 - (a) \$25.00 for each business day the report remains unfiled.
 - (b) An additional \$25.00 for each business day after the first three business days the report remains unfiled.
 - (c) An additional \$50.00 for each business day after the first 10 business days the report remains unfiled.

Late Contribution Reports – Electronic Filing

In June, the Michigan Department of State's Bureau of Elections announced the Immediate Disclosure Reporting or "e-IDR" program that allows committees registered on the state level to file Late Contribution Reports electronically. A memo dated June 30, 2006, was sent to all active committees registered with the Bureau of Elections announcing the program.

All committees are encouraged to use the e-IDR program voluntarily. However, committees that are required to file electronically because they have exceeded the \$20,000.00 threshold must also file Late Contribution Reports using e-IDR. Paper, email or fax copies no longer meet the filing requirements of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act; late filing fees may be assessed against reports that are required to be filed electronically and are not filed using e-IDR.

To file using e-IDR, go to www.Michigan.gov/sos and click the following: "Elections in Michigan," "Campaign Finance Disclosure," "Electronic Filing and MERTS" and then "Immediate Disclosure Reports (e-IDR)." Please bookmark this page for easy access the next time you need to file.

Reporting Waiver Provisions

A committee that does not expect to receive or spend more than \$1,000.00 in a calendar year is eligible for a Reporting Waiver. A committee that qualifies for, and receives, a Reporting Waiver is exempt from filing Campaign Statements.

- To become eligible for a Reporting Waiver, the committee must check item 10 on its Statement of Organization. This tells the filing official that the committee does not expect to receive or spend more than \$1,000.00 in a calendar year. The committee can check item 10 on its original Statement of Organization or on an amendment to its Statement of Organization.
- A committee that does not check item 10 on its Statement of Organization is not eligible for a Reporting Waiver. This means that the committee must file Campaign Statements regardless of the amount received or spent during the reporting period.
- A committee loses its Reporting Waiver if it receives or spends more than \$1,000.00 in a calendar year. Note that funds leftover at the end of the year count toward the amount received for the next calendar year. If the Reporting Waiver is lost, the committee must file the next required Campaign Statement.

Identification Requirement

The Michigan Campaign Finance Act requires PAC's, Ballot Question Committees and Political Party Committees to add the statement "**paid for with regulated funds**" to the identification or disclaimer included on printed matter or in paid radio or television advertisements. The following wording is recommended: "Paid for with regulated funds by (name and address of committee).

Merts Plus Software For Political Party Committees

The following reminders are offered for Political Party Committees using MERTS Plus software to file Campaign Statements electronically for the November 7, 2006 general election.

Questions concerning use of the software should be directed to MERTS Plus Tech Support at: (703) 749-4642 or sent by e-mail to techsupport@nicusa.com.

- **Election Cycles** – Make sure the correct election cycle(s) are entered into the Election Cycles Window. The election cycle for a candidate participating in the November 7th general election ends on November 7, 2006. For expenditures made after the November 7, 2006 general election to support or oppose candidates or issues, a new election cycle must be created for each candidate or ballot issue (Section 1.4 of the MERTS Plus Manual for Political Party Committees). The election cycle begins on the day after the last general election and ends on the day of the general election.

- **Campaigns** – Make sure the correct campaign(s) are created in the Campaign Window for each candidate or issue supported or opposed by the committee. For expenditures made after the November 7, 2006 general election to support or oppose candidates or issues, a new campaign must be created for each candidate or ballot issue (Section 1.5 of the MERTS Plus Manual for Political Party Committees).
- **Reporting Periods** – A separate report record (with correct coverage period dates) must be created in the Reports Window for each Campaign Statement that will be submitted by the committee electronically (Section 1.6 of the MERTS Plus Manual for Political Party Committees).
- **Amendments to Campaign Statements** – An amended Campaign Statement cannot be filed until an original Campaign Statement has been filed electronically. If more than one amendment to a report has been created, each amendment must be submitted electronically in the order it was created.

Obtaining the Merts Plus Software

State level committees wishing to obtain the MERTS Plus software may apply on-line at the MERTS Plus website <www.mertsplus.com>. Both on-site and on-line software-training options are available. Access to the software is provided to committees that have completed the training session and submitted an original or amended Statement of Organization requesting the MERTS Plus software.

Questions?

If you have any questions please feel free to phone us at (517) 373-2540 or write us at the address indicated below. The address below should also be used to mail your filings by first class mail, registered mail or certified mail.

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Post Office Box 20126
Lansing, Michigan 48901-0726

If you would like to visit our office or mail a filing by an overnight delivery service, the address below is provided.

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor
430 W. Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48918